



How many Christian denominations have been established since 100 C.E. to the present?

According to the most comprehensive research available, there are approximately 45,000 to 50,000 Christian denominations worldwide as of 2025, up from roughly 1,600 in 1900.^{[1] [2] [3]}

How the Count Is Determined

The Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, which maintains the *World Christian Database*, provides these figures. Their methodology counts a "denomination" as "an organised Christian group within a country". This definition is broader than theological distinctiveness alone.^{[2] [3]}

- The Catholic Church's presence in 234 countries counts as 234 separate denominations (or more when subdivided by rite, such as Byzantine or Latin)^[3]
- Lutheran churches in Germany and Australia count as separate organizations despite shared doctrine
- Many of the estimated denominations are independent churches, particularly in Africa, that share similar beliefs but operate under different leadership and locations^[2]

Major Categories

These thousands of denominations cluster into 6 major ecclesiastico-cultural mega-blocs:^[2]

Category	Approximate Count (2019 data)
Independent churches	~31,900
Protestant	~12,000
Roman Catholic	~370 (by country)
Orthodox	~584
Anglican	Varies by country
Marginal groups	Included in totals

Historical Growth

The explosive growth from 1,600 denominations in 1900 to nearly 50,000 today reflects several factors: the rise of independent churches, denominational fragmentation along national lines, and the proliferation of Pentecostal and non-denominational movements.^{[3] [2]}

Theological Note: While the organizational count exceeds 45,000, scholars note that the number of *significantly different theological traditions* is far smaller. Most of these groups share core Christian beliefs (God, creation, Jesus, salvation, Holy Spirit) and differ primarily on organizational structure, worship style, or secondary doctrinal matters.^[2]

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1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Christian_denominations
2. <https://the-way.info/2012/11/23/how-many-christian-denominations-worldwide/>
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDJh6Z0zkkM>
4. <https://www.gordonconwell.edu/blog/christianity-is-fragmented-why/>
5. <http://christianityinview.com/timeline.html>
6. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2453424871596374/posts/3926595117612668/>
7. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/335167595971988/posts/498910229597723/>
8. <https://www.bartehrman.com/christian-denominations/>
9. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8q6FUlay-M8>
10. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Christianity
11. https://www.reddit.com/r/Christianity/comments/igfuo5/what_is_the_oldest_formsectdenomination_or/
12. <https://www.worldhistory.org/christianity/>
13. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-early-Christianity>